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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

March 2009

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The March luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2009, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. The **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. Please call **by noon on Wednesday, March 18**, to assure your reservation and to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-five people. The price of the lunch is \$8.00.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES

It's time to send in your membership dues for 2009. If you are unsure about whether your fees are due, check the date on your address label. This date is your expiration date. Prices are fifteen dollars (\$15) for an individual and twenty-five (\$25) for a household.

Thank you to all members who have sent in your dues. If you have sent them in and the date on the label has not been changed, please call the society at 467-4090 so that we can correct our mistake.



Locomotives of the Poitevent and Favre Lumber Co. in Pearlington  
—photo from the Jermyn Collection

## The City of Pearlington

Edited by  
Eddie Coleman

The following article, with minimal editing, was taken from the August 27, 1892, edition of *The Sea Coast Echo*.

"Just a little distance (nine miles) above the mouth of Pearl River, where the limpid and beautiful waters are poured into the bosom of Lake Borgne, and forty-four miles from New Orleans, is situated the bustling and thriving little city of Pearlington. It occupies a proud and beautiful position on the

east bank of the river, and its 1500 inhabitants glory in the fact that no town along the entire river course, excepting Jackson, the capital of the state, equals it in point of population and commercial importance.

"The steamer *Pearlington* makes two trips daily to English Lookout, La., making close connection with trains on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. This steamer carries passengers and the mail. The schedule of the *Pearlington* is kept in perfect adjustment to that of the railroad for the comfort and convenience of all passengers and for the speedy delivery of the mails. The *Pearlington* is in the charge of Capt. R. S. Boardman, whose





## THE

**HISTORIAN**

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor  
Linda-Lou Nelson, PublisherPublished monthly by the  
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genial and obliging nature has won for him great popularity with the traveling public.

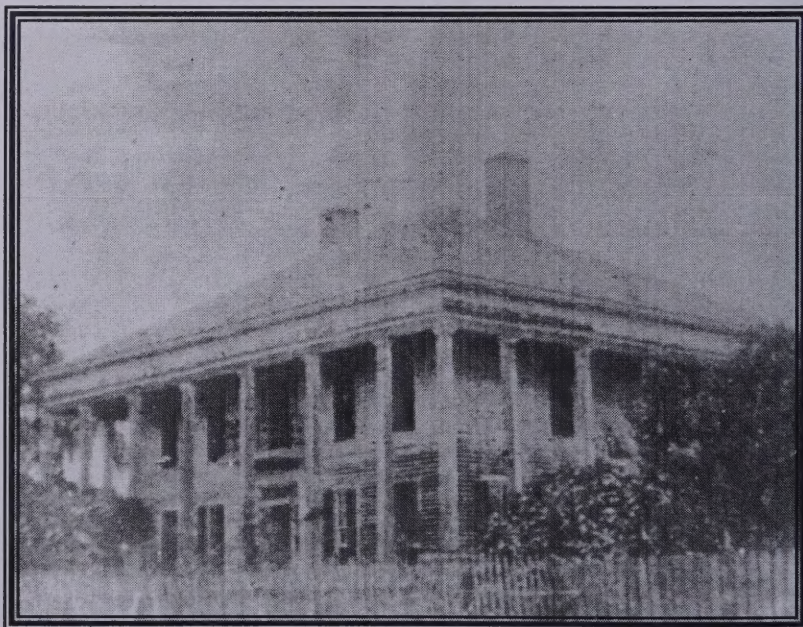
"Besides this close contact with the Crescent City, Pearlinton enjoys all the enlivenment and business advantages of constant and direct communication with the West Indies, Mexico, and the States of Central and South America, through means of its immense lumber traffic.

"The town is by no means youthful. Its history has covered a period of fully 100 years. The first settlements were made in the latter part of the last century. The oldest citizens remember it and speak of it as a town of some considerable size and business importance in their boyhood and girlhood days. In 1820 the Pearlinton Company was organized for the purpose of giving form to the town and of developing its growth and prosperity.

"In this formative period of the town's history such men as Simon Favre, Wm. T. Lenoir,

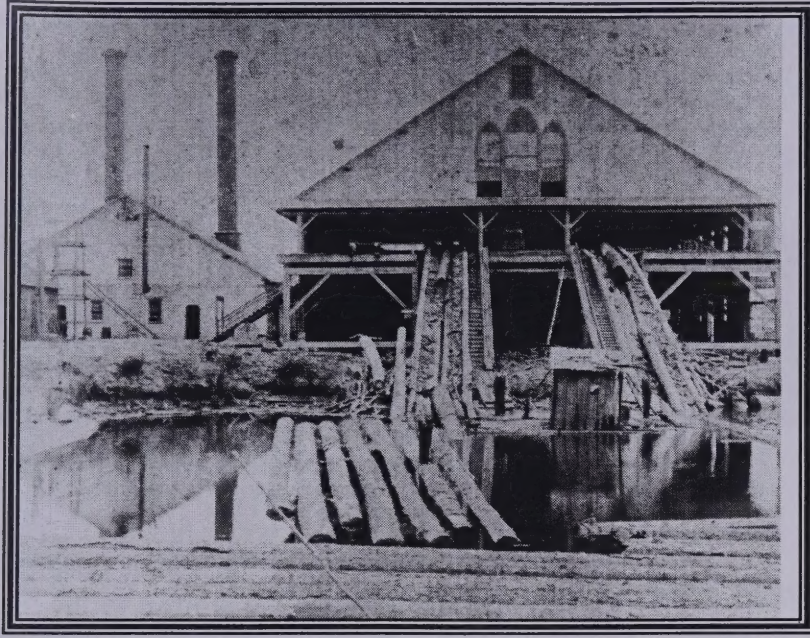
Francis B. Lenoir, Gen. Geo. H. Nixon, Col. P. P. R. Pray, Isaac Graves, Thomas Shields, Samuel White, John Parker, James Murphy, John B. Doby, F. Netto, G. Casanova, Samuel Russ, Leonard Kimball, C. D. Larned, and Willis H. Arnold were the leading spirits. They were men of great force of character; some of them were conspicuous figures in the history of Mississippi. Their names are held in the highest honor, and their descendants occupy proud and influential positions in business, social, and religious circles.

"At a later day two men of mark figured in the life of the town, Capt. W. J. Poitevent and Col. J. F. H. Claiborne. Capt. Poitevent was an enterprising and successful businessman. He was the father of Captain John Poitevent, who is well-known throughout all business circles as the president of the Poitevent & Favre Lumber Company and president of the East Louisiana Railroad. He was also the father of the gifted Mrs. E. J. Nichol-



Home of Captain W. J. Poitevent on the Pearl River in Logtown





Poitevent & Favre Sawmill at Pearlington in 1890

son [Pearl Rivers, pseudonym of Eliza Poitevent Nicholson]. Col. Claiborne was an author, scholar, and politician, who did valuable service to the coast section and to the state at large. His name is honored in the homes of all intelligent Mississippians.

"The business of the town at that early period was widely different from that of the present time. Pearlington was then a cotton market of considerable importance. It was raised to a small extent in the adjacent country and brought in wagons from a distance. The principal cotton supply, however, was from the rich and large plantations on and near the Pearl River, more than 100 miles above. This trade was carried on by means of flatboats. The cotton was brought down the river to Pearlington, transferred to schooners, and shipped across Lake Pontchartrain to New Orleans. The shipment for some seasons amounted to from 3000

to 5000 bales. This brought great prosperity to other lines of business. A handsome revenue was also derived from stock raising. Immense herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were pastured at a nominal expense upon the wide stretches of pine forest, which were covered with the finest grasses. The construction of the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad (now the Illinois Central) was the death blow to the cotton trade, for this road did the business that had previously come down Pearl River to Pearlington. It, however, proved a blessing instead of a curse, for it caused attention to be turned to the long neglected work of developing the immense resources of wealth in the yellow pine timber.

"Pearlington, in its present conditions of life and business, began in 1865, when Capt. John Poitevent came into possession of a sawmill and began his wonderfully successful ca-

reer in the lumber business. He was joined in this enterprise in 1866 by Capt. J. A. Favre who bought an interest in the mill. At the beginning these young men had but little means, but they had broad business views and unswerving faith in the largest possibilities of the lumber business. They were fertile in resources and wisely laid their plans for continued enlargement. The phenomenal success that has attended all their enterprises abundantly justifies the wisdom of their early views and plans. In twenty-five years they have grown from the management of a small sawmill to the ownership of the largest and perhaps the most valuable in the South. They have not only enlarged their business and amassed wealth, but have laid the foundation for prosperity to the entire town. Every line of business operated in Pearlington draws its support either directly or indirectly from the mammoth business of the Poitevent & Favre Lumber Company.

"The mill plant of this enterprising company consists of two circular mills and one gang, having an aggregate daily capacity of 200,000 feet of lumber. They also have a planing mill of a very large capacity. These mills consume about 100,000 logs each year. For many years the demand for logs was supplied, almost wholly, by raftsmen floating timber down Pearl River. This business is still carried on to a considerable extent. The principal supply, however, is from the extensive pine forests of St. Tammany and Washington Parishes, La., about 100,00 acres





Loggers at work

of which are owned by Poitevent & Favre. They manifested farsightedness in the management of their lumber interests by purchasing several years ago that immense area of virgin forest, and by constructing a narrow gauge through it. This road acts as a feeder for the mill plant. The logs are drawn by rail to the river and are then floated down to the mill site. They are caught by an arrangement of piles and diverted into a canal, thence they are drawn by tugboats to the foot of the mill.

"The log road gave birth to the East Louisiana Railroad. It was converted in 1887 into a standard system and extended to Madenville. By this enterprise Messrs. Poitevent & Favre largely increased their revenue, and contributed to the development of the country contiguous to the railroad.

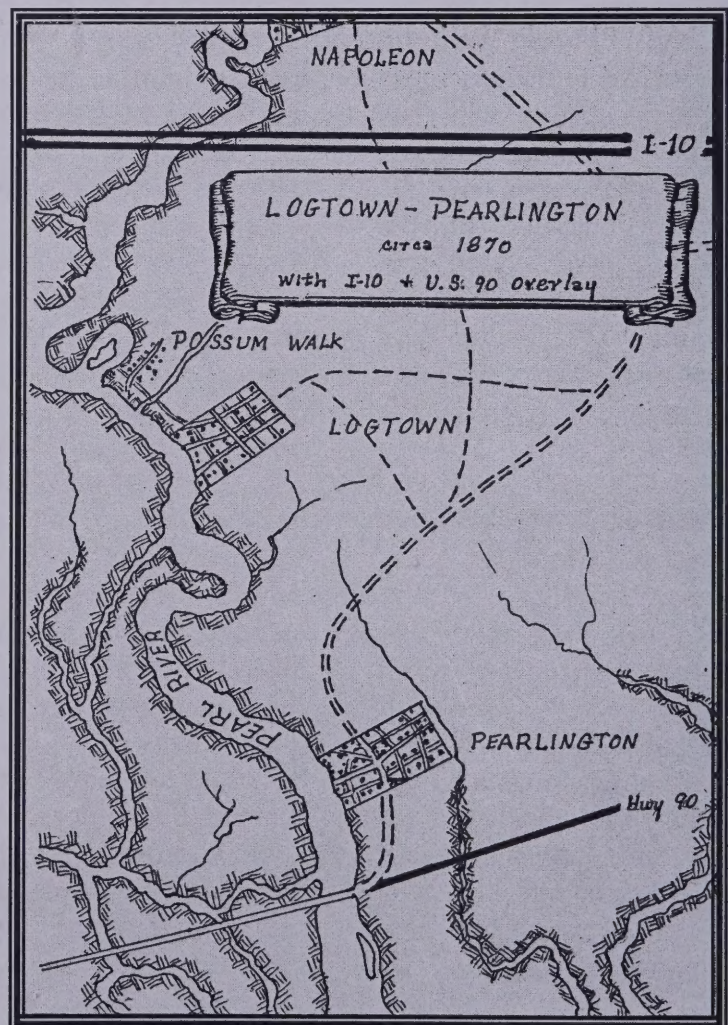
"Pearlington enjoys prominence on account of the extensive operations and great volume of trade of its sawmills. The largest contracts are promptly and satisfactorily filled. Poitevent and Favre filled a contract for the Mississippi Jetties of 50,000,000 feet of lumber. They furnished about 20,000,000 feet for the New Or-

leans Exposition building and 5,000,000 for the St. Louis bridge. They have just shipped a bill of 1,000,000 feet to a South American port, and one of 700,000 feet to England. They own and operate four large sail-

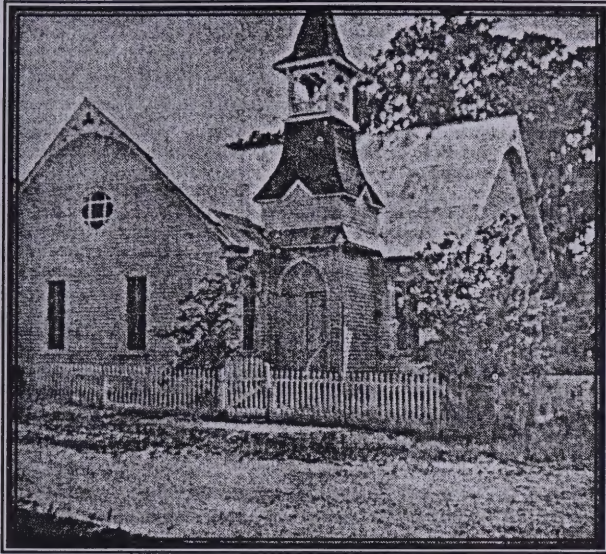
ing vessels and nine smaller ones, besides two steamers and two tugboats. The large vessels have a capacity 135,000 to 400,000 feet. They carry their valuable cargoes of lumber directly to the West Indies, Mexico, Central, and South America. The smaller vessels have a capacity of 35,000 to 55,000 feet. They carry lumber to New Orleans and to Ship Island where it is transferred to the largest vessels, which carry it to various parts of the world.

"One of the most pleasing features of this great business is that it is the product of the fertile brains, iron will, indomitable courage, and business sagacity of Pearlington's two most distin-

(Continued on p. 6)







## Logtown Methodist Church

By Scott Bagley

This month our series on Hancock County historical churches takes a somewhat different turn by taking a look at a church that no longer exists (and not because of a storm!) but was nevertheless very much a part of its community during its tenure. We speak of the Logtown Methodist Church which stood on the town's Main Street directly across from Logtown Cemetery until it was demolished in 1963.

While the church's history no doubt reaches back before 1880, the records are rather scarce. From the sources available it seems that, around 1875, Henry Weston, a prominent pioneer lumberman in Logtown, realized that this river community needed a church. Accordingly, he facilitated bringing to Logtown the Reverend Inman W. Cooper, who, "although only 20 years of age, had already shown promise in his chosen field."

The Logtown Methodist Church which stood at the corner of Main and Third Streets until its removal because of its location in the Stennis Space Center's buffer zone

Sometime after the arrival of Rev. Cooper, the Methodist Church in Logtown was built by the above mentioned Mr. Weston and the lumber company bearing his name on a piece of land given to the church by the family of Henry Carre. The church remained on this location for its entire history. For many years the church was simply known as Cooper's Chapel in honor of its first pastor. Except for Rev. Cooper, no records have been found reflecting any pastors, if any, of the church prior to 1880.

For over eighty years the Methodist Church in Logtown was quite active, and likely its presence was one of the reasons for the almost complete absence of crime in the community, even during the years when the lumber mills were in full production and Logtown achieved a population of nearly two thousand people. The church's youth and women organizations (the Epworth League and the W. S. C. S.) had reputations for being very active. The church also had a strong Sunday School and was well attended until it was

discontinued because of limited membership. No doubt its strength was due in no small part to two long serving Sunday School Superintendents: J. S. Otis and D. R. Weston. Mr. Otis served in this position for forty-three years followed by Mr. Weston who served for twenty years.

As with the remainder of Logtown and other communities in the area, the church under the pastorate of the Reverend P. E. Hatch closed its doors in 1963 to make way for what is now the Stennis Space Center. One of its last services was the church's homecoming on August 25, 1963. The sermon during this service was preached by the Reverend J. D. Slay, District Superintendent of the Meridian District and pastor of the Logtown church from 1934 to 1935. Following the service, basket lunches were spread at the Logtown School gymnasium where all attendees were invited to share in the fellowship.

For four generations the Logtown Methodist Church did much in "...molding the character and lives of its members and of others who came under its influence." While the church and the community it served are now gone, visitors still come to the footprints along the Pearl River and reflect on this unique corner of southwest Mississippi.

SOURCES:

Gray, Charles Harry. *Logtown Revisited* (booklet) 20 April 1988.

*History of Logtown Methodist Church.* Published for the Logtown Methodist Church Homecoming Service, 25 August 1963.





Hancock County  
Bank at  
Logtown

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The new year has brought a couple of changes to the Historical Society. We welcome Carol Wasielewski, elected as our executive board secretary, and Beth Weidlich, a volunteer helping with office and other administrative responsibilities. We look forward to working with both Carol and Beth and do appreciate the giving of their time.

A couple of our members have recently donated some plants for our yard. This spring the yard should shine as it hasn't in a long time. We've still got some space for some additional planting so if you've got something you'd like to share, please bring it by. We'll supply the labor to put it out. Remember...we're amateur historians not horticulturists so plants that are easy to care for are highly preferred.

I regret to announce that the Society's automatic dishwasher has died. It had a good life

and we'll miss it, but it is time to move on. Accordingly, thanks to some recent end of year donations, the board has approved the purchase of a new dishwasher. Mary and Jerry Zimmerman have volunteered to purchase and install this new appliance...hopefully before our next luncheon meeting.

While our other kitchen appliances still work, I'm afraid their time is limited also. New appliances would be preferable, but we're certainly open to used appliances should you or someone you know have one they'd like to donate. A new stove is needed first followed closely by a new refrigerator.

Our monthly luncheons continue to provide interesting programs, and Michelle's food is always tasty. Remember that reservations are required by noon Wednesday, the day prior to the Thursday luncheon.

Please let us know of ideas you might have regarding any projects you'd like to see the Society involved in as well as subject matter for articles appearing in our monthly newsletter.

Scott Bagley

(Continued from p. 4)  
"City of Pearlington"

guished native citizens, Capt. John Poitevent and Capt. J. A. Favre, both having been born and reared in or near Pearlington. Their marvelous success proves beyond question that Southern pluck is equal to the task of developing wonderful resources of wealth in the South."

## BOOKS FOR SALE AT LOBRANO HOUSE

*Bay Saint Louis: Celebrating the First 300 Years*  
By the HCHS (\$15.00)

A nostalgic keepsake of the city's history including descriptions and pictures of many of the historic buildings and houses especially those along Beach Boulevard prior to Katrina

*Heritage Cookbook*  
By the HCHS (\$15.00)

A collection of our members' favorite family recipes

*Holly*  
By Paul La Violette (\$20.00)

An intriguing anthology of tales of a tomat li in a beach house on the Gulf Coast

*Katrina Cookbook*  
By Charlet Russell (\$19.95)

A collection of recipes by Bayou Tours

*Mississippi's No-Man's Land*  
(Temporarily out of stock)  
By Marco Giardino, Ph.D., and Russell Guerin (\$10.95)

The story of the Koch family, early settlers of Hancock County, and their experiences during the Civil War, based on their letters

*One Dog, Two Dogs, Three Dogs, Four...*  
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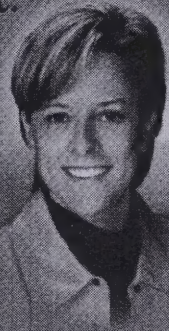
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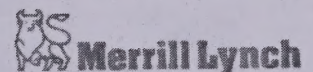
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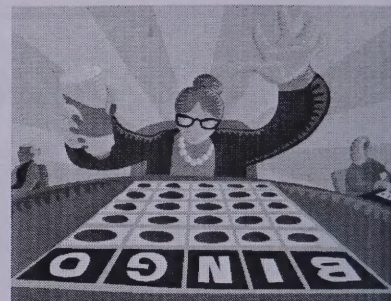


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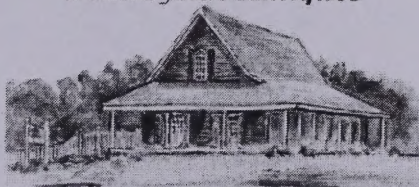
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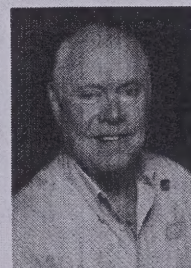
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